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VOID RIVALS

image

#02

ENERGON UNIVERSE

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THE SACRED RING.

"JUMP JET PILOT DARAK REPORTING FOR DUTY, DIRECTOR ELANDER."

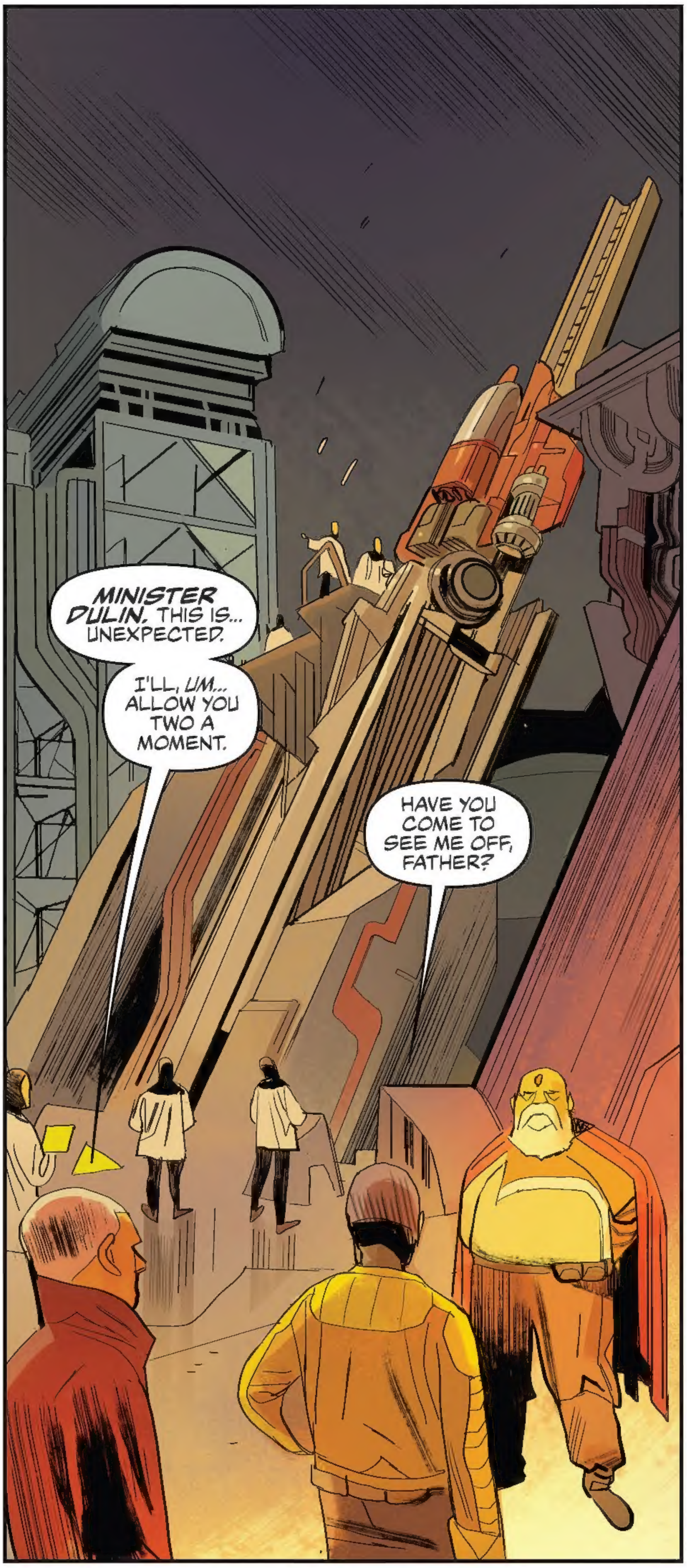
COORDINATES HAVE BEEN LOGGED INTO YOUR HANDROID. AT ITS CURRENT SPEED, YOU'LL ONLY HAVE 12.3 SECONDS TO LATCH ON BEFORE YOU'RE OUT OF RANGE.

SHOULD BE MORE THAN ENOUGH TIME.

LONG RANGE SENSORS ESTIMATE FOUR THOUSAND TONS OF ICE. THAT WOULD BE AN EXCELLENT ADDITION TO OUR RESERVES.

INTEL SUGGESTS THE ZERTONIANS ARE CURRENTLY RATIONING WATER. IF WE WANT TO MAINTAIN THIS ADVANTAGE--

DON'T WORRY, SIR. THEY WON'T GET IT. YOU CAN COUNT ON ME.


MINISTER DULIN. THIS IS... UNEXPECTED.
I'LL, UM... ALLOW YOU TWO A MOMENT.
HAVE YOU COME TO SEE ME OFF, FATHER?

DARAK, IN A MATTER OF MOMENTS, YOU WILL LAUNCH AS THE GREATEST AGORRIAN PILOT IN HISTORY.
THAT IS THE ONLY THING THAT HAS SPARED YOU FROM MY WRATH.
RETURN WITH THE SAME STERLING RECORD... OR DO NOT RETURN AT ALL.

BE AWARE, WE DETECTED THE COMET'S APPROACH FROM AGORRIAN SPACE. WE HAVE AN APPROXIMATE SIX MINUTE ADVANTAGE OVER THE ZERTONIANS.

THEY ARE NO DOUBT SCRAMBLING A ***STAR WING*** NOW. THAT ADVANTAGE WON'T HOLD.

I WON'T LET YOU DOWN, DIRECTOR.

I HAVE NO DOUBT.

LIGHTSPEED TO YOU, DARAK.

SYSTEM CHECK COMPLETE.

HANDROID, THIS MISSION IS HIGH-PRIORITY. REVIVE ME THE ***INSTANT*** WE CROSS THE EVENT HORIZON.

THIS IS NOT MY FIRST LAUNCH, PILOT.

IGNITION.

LAUNCH INITIATED.

KA-

BOOM

WE ARE CLEAR. REVIVER ADMINISTERED.

PILOT.

PILOT?

TWO THRIVING WORLDS.

AN UNENDING WAR.

A DYING SUN.

TWO WARRING CIVILIZATIONS MUST COME TOGETHER... OR PERISH APART.

PILOT?

THEIR SALVATION WOULD BE... **THE SACRED RING.**

THE HEAVENS QUAKED AS GENERATIONS WERE BORN, LIVING AND DYING, GIVING EVERYTHING THEY HAD TO THE EFFORT.

MOTHERS AND FATHERS TAUGHT SONS AND DAUGHTERS WHO TAUGHT SONS AND DAUGHTERS WHO TAUGHT SONS AND DAUGHTERS FOR **THOUSANDS** OF YEARS.

GENERATIONS CAME AND WENT, KNOWING ONLY LABOR AND SACRIFICE.

THE PEACE MAINTAINED TO CREATE THE RING... WOULD NOT LAST. THOUSANDS OF YEARS UNITED.

NOW TORN APART.

CENTURIES PASS.

RUMORS BECOME MYTHS.

PILOT?!

MYTHS BECOME LEGENDS.

PILOT? WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

LEGENDS FADE WITH THE SANDS OF TIME.

IT IS INADVISABLE TO REMOVE YOUR HELMET DURING FLIGHT.

A SHARED PAST, BARELY REMEMBERED

THIS IS NOT A KNOWN SIDE EFFECT OF THE REVIVER.

ONLY CONFLICT REMAINS.

PILOT?

AGORRIANS.

ZERTONIANS.

DIFFERENT IN EVERY WAY.

DIFFERENT CULTURES. DIFFERENT VALUES. DIFFERENT WAYS OF LIFE. IN SO MANY WAYS THEY COULDN'T BE MORE DISTANT.

AND THEY COULDN'T **FEAR** AND HATE EACH OTHER MORE.

AS RESOURCES IN THE LOCAL SOLAR SYSTEM DWINDLED, THE FIGHTING **ESCALATED.**

THEIR ONLY INTERACTION IN WAR AND FROM A DISTANCE.

BOTH ONLY KNEW THE STORIES TOLD OF THE OTHER.

THE TRUTH WAS LOST.

BUT THE TIMES ARE DARK AND ONLY GROWING DARKER STILL.

THE COMING OF **GOLIANT** IS DRAWING NEAR.

WHAT ONCE WAS ONE MUST BECOME WHOLE AGAIN... OR **PERISH.**

PILOT?
PILOT?
HN...
COMET PROXIMITY ALERT. ENCOUNTER WINDOW OPENS IN FIVE SECONDS.
FOUR.
WOW... I'M...
THREE.
I'M ON IT. SETTING COORDINATES NOW. READYING SNARE.
THAT *VOICE.* I'D NEVER HEARD ANYTHING LIKE IT.
BOTH ARTIFICIAL... BUT ALSO ORGANIC. IT STILL HAUNTS ME.

IT WAS THE VOICE OF ***ZERTA*** YOU HEARD. SHE SPEAKS TRUTH TO THOSE WILLING TO LISTEN.

YOU KNOW AGORRIANS DON'T BELIEVE IN YOUR MYTHS AND SUPERSTITIONS, SOLILA.

WHETHER YOU CHOOSE TO RECOGNIZE IT, YOU HAVE BEEN GIFTED A GREAT BLESSING. YOU WERE SHOWN A ***TRUTH...*** HIDDEN TO YOUR KIND AND MINE.

A TRUTH, IT SEEMS... ONLY WE NOW KNOW.

WHEN I FIRST HAD THE VISION, I WAS EXCITED FOR WHAT IT COULD MEAN.

NOW I SEE IT FOR THE ***BURDEN*** IT IS.

BOTH OUR KIND, COMMITTED TO A WAR BUILT ON ***LIES.***

THERE IS NO TELLING HOW DEEP THIS CONSPIRACY GOES. ON ***BOTH*** SIDES.

THIS SECRET GOES NOWHERE IF WE DON'T ***SURVIVE.***

HAND ME YOUR HELMET.

HM...

IT IS ONLY NOW THAT I REALIZE IT MAY NOT BE OUR ***SPIES*** THAT MAKE OUR TECHNOLOGIES SO... ***COMPATIBLE.***

ALL THE DELICATE NAVIGATION INSTRUMENTS ARE FRIED, BUT I THINK I CAN USE THE DIAGNOSTICS IN THE HELMETS AND SOME OF THE CIRCUITRY TO REPAIR IT.

I'M HOPING THE CIRCUITS IN THE ***HELMETS*** WILL BE ***ENOUGH.***

I DON'T CARE FOR WHAT YOU'RE IMPLYING, DARAK...

IF YOU STRIP IT DOWN TO WEIGH AS LITTLE AS POSSIBLE, THE ATMOSPHERE HERE IS THIN ENOUGH THAT OUR ***ONE*** WORKING THRUSTER COULD BE ENOUGH TO BREAK ORBIT.

HOLY CRAP. YOU'RE ***RIGHT!***

ANALYZING... YES. SHE IS.

IT'LL BE CRAMPED, BUT THERE'S ENOUGH OF MY COCKPIT LEFT TO BE FUNCTIONAL.

IT WON'T SEAL COMPLETELY, SO I'LL HAVE TO REPAIR OUR FLIGHT SUITS SO WE DON'T FREEZE TO DEATH.

IT WON'T BE PRETTY... BUT IT COULD WORK.

YOUR DESIGN IS SOUND. IT ***WILL*** WORK.

BUT IT WILL BE ***HIDEOUS.***

DAY SIX.

YOU'RE STRONGER THAN YOU LOOK.

I WORKED AS AN ***EDGEWALKER*** WHEN I WAS YOUNGER... TO REBEL AGAINST MY FATHER.

DAY TEN.

DAY FOURTEEN.

WOW. NICE.

ALL I CAN THINK OF ARE THE SORELY NEEDED RESOURCES SOARING BY.

PARTY-POOPER.

DAY TWENTY.

WELL... YOU WERE RIGHT. IT AIN'T MUCH TO LOOK AT.

...

NO. *WAIT.*

I THINK WE'RE GOING TO *DIE* IN THAT THING.

BUT IT'LL BE *WAY* MORE EXCITING THAN STARVING TO DEATH HERE.

I STILL DO NOT CARE FOR YOUR KIND.

...

WELL, I APPRECIATE YOUR HELP IN GETTING US OFF THIS ROCK.

I'D BE DEAD WITHOUT YOU.

SOLILA?

SOLILA?!

WAIT!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
STAY BACK!
HEY!
WHAT HAPPENED?!
I'VE TRAINED ALL MY *LIFE* TO KILL AGORRIANS. I HAVE FAILED MY PEOPLE. YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND, THAT COMET WAS OUR SALVATION.
IT'S A BETRAYAL JUST TO SAY THIS, BUT OUR WATER RESERVES ARE NEARLY SPENT.
MY PEOPLE COULD BE *DOOMED.*
AND I'M BUSY TRYING TO SAVE MY *OWN* LIFE. AND *YOURS.*
I'M A *TRAITOR.*
YOU'RE NOT.
I *AM.* WE *BOTH* ARE.
YOU ACT LIKE WE'RE GOING TO GET HOME. HAVE YOU *SEEN* THAT THING? WE'LL BE LUCKY IF WE DON'T EXPLODE AS SOON AS WE IGNITE IT.
AND WE'RE STILL IN UNCHARTED SPACE. *BEST* CASE SCENARIO, WE *STARVE* IN THAT BUCKET INSTEAD OF ON THIS ROCK.
BY ZERTA, YOU ARE THE *ABSOLUTE WORST.*
WELL? ARE YOU COMING OR NOT?

BRA-WOOSH

I WAS KIDDING ABOUT US STARVING, BY THE WAY.

WE'LL SUFFOCATE *LONG* BEFORE THAT.

MY TRANSPONDER IS STILL FUNCTIONAL. IF YOUR HANDROID CAN HELP POINT US TOWARD THE SACRED RING, MAYBE... JUST MAYBE SOMEONE WILL PICK IT UP.

IF WE SOMEHOW GET THAT FAR... I DON'T EVEN CARE WHICH SIDE FINDS US.

IN THE MEANTIME... WE'RE JUST ROCKETING THROUGH UNCHARTED SPACE, BROADCASTING A SIGNAL TO ALL THE DARKEST CORNERS.

FUN.

ADJUSTMENT COMPLETE. HANDROID?

TRAJECTORY IS CORRECT. AT CURRENT SPEED WE WILL REACH THE SACRED RING IN... 12.4 YEARS.

SORRY.

WE'VE BEEN AT THIS FOR DAYS. HOW LONG UNTIL WE REACH SIGNAL RANGE?

LONG RANGE SENSORS WILL DETECT A DECAYED PING IN ROUGHLY EIGHT DAYS. IT WILL TAKE THEM ROUGHLY THREE TO SEVEN DAYS TO NOTICE THE PING'S PERSISTENT SIGNAL AND FRACTIONAL IMPROVEMENT.

WHAT THEY DO WITH THAT INFORMATION IS UNKNOWN.

I'M DETECTING A SIGNAL MOVING *TOWARD* US.

FAST.

THAT'S...

AN *ASTEROID.* IGNITING EVASIVE THRUSTER.

IT'S *FOLLOWING.*

KLAK KLANG

THEY'RE PULLING US IN!

HOW MUCH CHARGE DOES YOUR BLASTER HAVE?

MAYBE THEY'RE NOT HOSTILE? LET'S START WITH "HELLO" OR "HAVE ANY FOOD?"

I THINK I'M WITH THE ZERTONIAN ON THIS ONE.

ZWUBB

STAY BEHIND ME IF YOU'RE NOT READY TO FIGHT.

HAPPILY.

WHAT IS THIS PLACE?

IT'S LIKE NOTHING I'VE SEEN BEFORE. TECHNOLOGY SOME-HOW... MELDED WITH AN ASTEROID? FOR COVERT PURPOSES?

INGENIUS.

I GLADLY ACCEPT YOUR COMPLIMENT, STRANGER!

NOW, SURRENDER. YOU AND ALL YOU POSSES IS CLAIMED BY--

SKUXXOID!

SEND YOUR QUESTIONS TO VOIDRIVALS@SKYBOUND.COM

Hi folks,

Welcome back to VOID RIVALS! Not only did you all come out an support our first issue, but the demand was so HUGE, it sold out immediately, and we went back for a second printing that hit stores last week with two awesome covers featuring Jetfire: one by Jason Howard and one by Marz Jr.

For those our you new to Skybound and our internationally famous letters pages, here's what to expect:

1. We need a letters page name. That's… important. Please send your best ideas to the email address above, we'll pick one before the end of the first arc, and then send the winner some cool stuff to be mailed later.
2. We've been flooded with letters since the kickoff to the all-new ENERGON UNIVERSE (Transformers! G.I. Joe! Brand-new stuff!), so keep sending them in, and Robert and I will start answering as many as possible next issue.
3. That's it! Be polite & respectful? Do I really need to say that? We like to keep it loose and we're totally open to criticism, but no bad words, okay? Great.

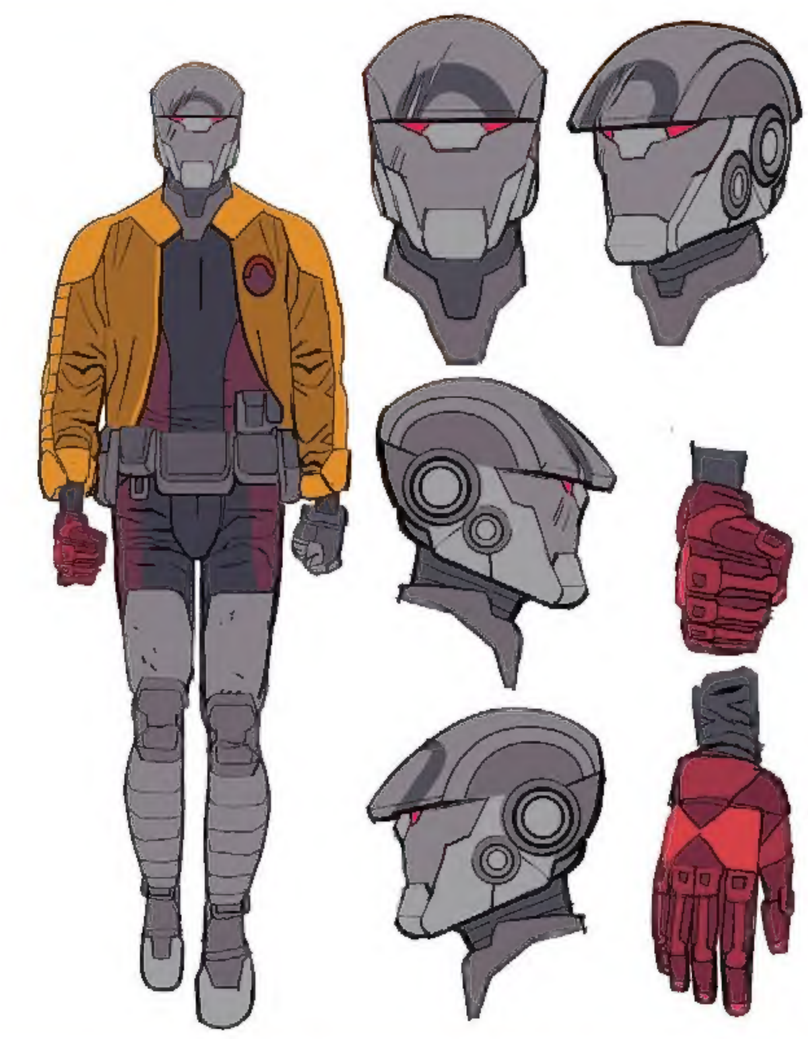
While you wait for the next issue, check out Lorenzo's designs for this comic's stars: Darak and Solila.

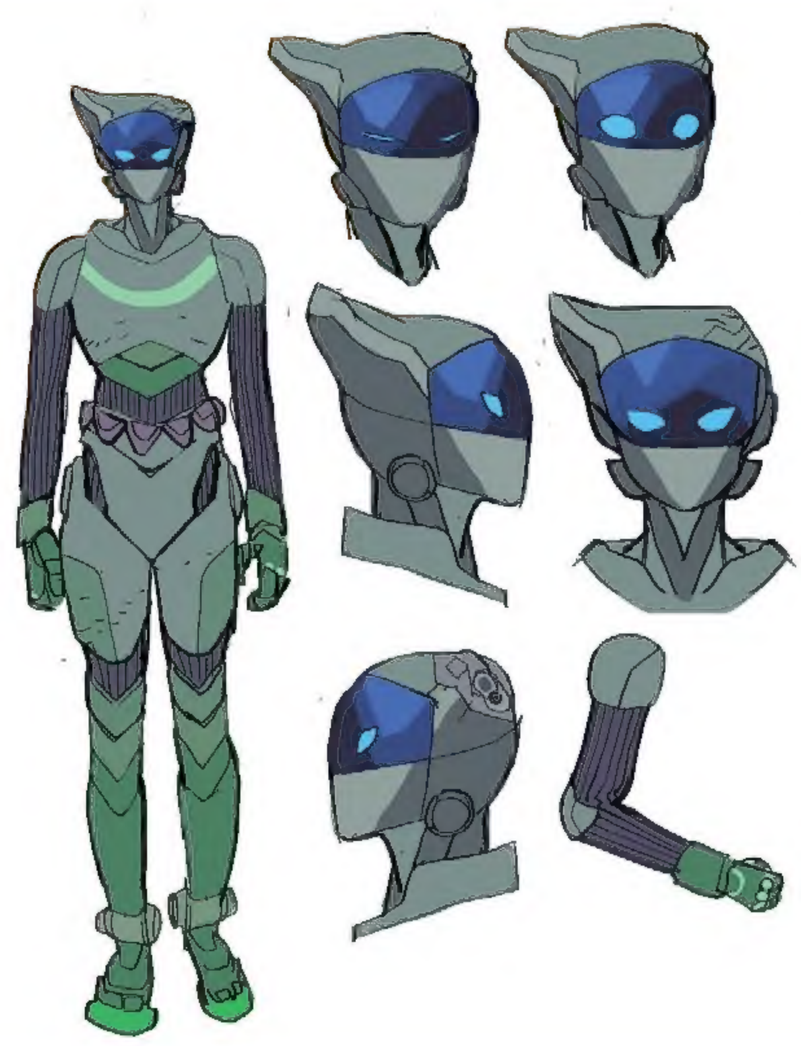
While they were always planned to be humanoids under their armor, Robert and Lorenzo wanted to give the impression that they might be robots, and so each needed helmets that could be expressive and emote throughout the first issue.

Also, THIS VERY MOMENT, a lot of the main creatives behind the EU—Robert, Dan, Josh—will be at San Diego Comic-Con, and we'll have convention exclusive comics for sale, signings at the Skybound AND Hasbro booths, plus a panel where all of us will be talking and debuting some incredibly cool art. I'm both excited and exhausted to share it all with you.

See you next month,

-Sean





"[TILLIE WALDEN'S] BOLDLY AUTHENTIC VOICE BRINGS NEW HEIGHTS TO THE WORLD OF THE WALKING DEAD."
-ROBERT KIRKMAN

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BOOK TWO

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